

## Chapter 2: Heating Envelope Building Measures

### 2.1 Heating Envelope Insulation

The building heating envelope comprises those surfaces that function as the boundary between conditioned and unconditioned spaces. These surfaces may include, but are not limited to, exterior walls, attics, foundations, and exposed floors. Insulation reduces heat transmission by slowing conduction, convection, and radiation through the building envelope. Insulation forms the *thermal boundary* — the boundary that separates conditioned space from unconditioned space. Air-tight materials that cover the walls, floor, and ceiling to prevent air movement form the *pressure boundary*. The thermal and pressure boundaries should be aligned to maintain the thermal resistance of the insulation. The pressure boundary must be fully addressed before proceeding with work on the thermal boundary except for circumstances where both pressure and thermal boundaries are addressed at the same time such as dense pack insulation. See *Locating the Pressure/Thermal Boundary in Chapter One – Section 1.5.3* for information on how to address the pressure boundary.

### 2.2 Attic and Roof Insulation

#### 2.2.1 Pre-insulation Attic and Roof Insulation Prep

Perform these preparatory steps and safety procedures before installing attic insulation:

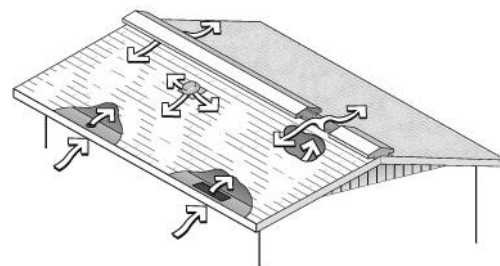
1. Vent all exhaust appliances to the outdoors, as specified in Chapter 3 – Section 3.13 using a dedicated exhaust termination. Seal and insulate the exhaust duct to R-6 to prevent condensation. Check all fans for proper backdraft-damper operation. Repair or replace the damper, or the entire fan assembly, if the damper doesn't operate freely.
2. Isolate insulation a minimum of 2 inches from chimneys and flues or as required by manufacturer specifications or applicable codes, using rigid damming material. Do not allow insulation to spill into clearance spaces.
3. Repair roof leaks and other attic-related moisture problems before insulating attic.
4. Confirm that all wire splices are enclosed in electrical junction boxes. If a junction box will be covered with insulation, mark its location with a sign or flag.
5. Do not cover live knob-and-tube wiring with insulation. When not removing wiring, maintain 3-inch clearance around live knob-and-tube wiring using appropriate materials. See *Electrical Safety in Chapter 5 – Section 5.4*.
6. Check the manufacturer's specifications to determine if fixtures can be covered with insulation. If fixtures cannot be covered with insulation, or if Insulated Contact (IC)-

rating is unknown, keep all insulation 3 inches from these fixtures. Wisconsin's Department of Safety and Professional Services has granted a waiver allowing the use of half-inch drywall as a barrier. Fasten shields or covers securely to the rafter or ceiling joist so that they maintain 3 inches of clearance and don't move or collapse.

7. If heating-system ductwork runs through the attic, seal and insulate as appropriate (see Chapter 3 – Sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3). Do not apply duct insulation to ducts that will be surrounded by R-10 or more of loose-fill insulation.
8. If attic ventilation is required, ensure that ventilation provides for free air flow. Air leakage through the pressure boundary increases as the amount of attic ventilation increases — so don't install more attic ventilation than is necessary. See *Attic Ventilation in Chapter 2 - Section 2.2.3* for more information.
9. If attic is used for storage, eliminate or reduce the amount of storage area with the customer's approval. Storage area must maintain a minimum of R-19 for attic insulation. Build insulation dam around the area. If items are present during insulation, either temporarily remove items from area or cover with plastic or a tarp.
10. Consider installing attic rulers. It may be helpful to staple the ruler at the top and leave the bottom unstapled. This reduces the chance of the insulation hose knocking the ruler loose during the blow.
11. Consider placing a fiberglass batt on top of the exhaust-fan housing in the attic before blowing insulation. The batt will prevent loose-fill insulation from spilling into the home if the fan is replaced in the future.

### 2.2.3 Attic Ventilation

Install attic ventilation when it is needed. When installing ventilation, there should be an equal distribution of vent area across all attic areas whenever possible. Split the net free area of attic ventilation equally between high and low venting, if possible. Consult state and local building codes for requirements on the minimum amount of attic ventilation.



**Low and high attic ventilation:** A moderate amount of ventilation creates air exchange with outdoors to remove moisture and to keep the attic from overheating in summer.

#### Gable Vents

Install gable-end vents as high in the gable end as possible and above the final level of the attic insulation. Existing gable vents should be boxed if insulation comes up to the bottom of the vent.

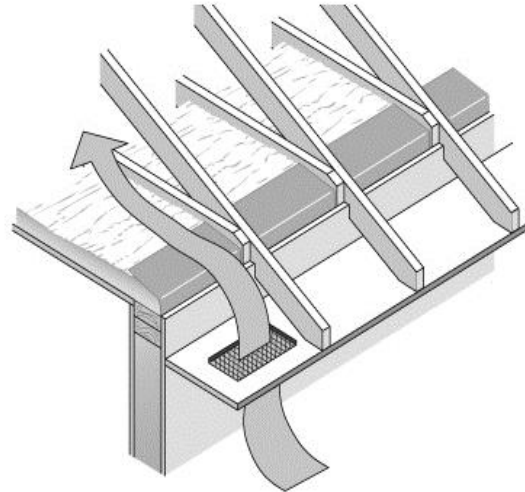
## Roof Vents

Install the top flashing of the roof vents under asphalt shingles, and mechanically fasten and seal with plastic roof cement or with products specifically designed for this purpose. Center all roof vents between rafters. Where possible, mount vents no closer than 12 inches (measured vertically) from the ridge of the roof of the attic insulated.

## Soffit Vents

When soffit venting is required, use products specifically designed for this purpose. Eave chutes allow the installation of the maximum amount of insulation over the exterior top-plate. Chutes can also prevent wind-washing of the insulation, which degrades the insulation's R-value. Install eave chutes as necessary to promote sufficient ventilation of the attic.

Mechanically fasten eave chutes at the top, and install blocking at the base to prevent insulation from spilling over into the soffit area. In rafter cavities where a chute is not installed, make sure the cavity is blocked with fiberglass batts or a rigid barrier to prevent spill-over into the soffit area. Chutes must be long enough to extend above the final insulation level.



**Soffit chute or dam:** Allows installation of maximum amount of insulation in this cold area. Also prevents wind washing and airway blockage by blown insulation.

## 2.2.4 Attic Accesses, Walk-up Stairways and Doors

### Attic Accesses

Perform these tasks to address attic accesses, walk-up stairways and doors prior to insulation:

1. Insulate accessible attic accesses to the R-value of the adjacent attic insulation or to the maximum structurally allowable, whichever is lower. Access must be operable, weather-stripped and air-sealed.
2. Install durable damming material to maintain the R-value of the attic insulation up to the access and to prevent loose-fill insulation from entering the home.
3. Post warnings in access to attics with asbestos containing materials or vermiculite. See Appendix H of the Wisconsin Weatherization Program Manual for more information about asbestos.



## **Walk-Up Stairways and Doors**

Establish a continuous insulation and air barrier around or over the top of an attic stairway. If the attic is accessed using a stairwell and standard vertical door, there are two methods for treatment.

### **Method 1**

Insulate the walls of the stairwell, beneath landings, stair treads and risers. Insulate and weather-strip the back of the door to the R-value of the adjacent wall insulation or the maximum structurally allowable, whichever is lower.

When planning to insulate stairwells, investigate for barriers, such as fire blocking, that might prevent insulation from filling cavities. Consider which passageways may lead to other areas where insulation should not be installed, such as closets or chimney chases. Balloon-framed walls and deep stair cavities complicate this measure.



### **Method 2**

Establish the thermal boundary at the ceiling level by installing an insulated and air-sealed horizontal hatch at the top of the stairs. Insulate the hatch to the R-value of the adjacent attic insulation or the maximum structurally allowable, whichever is lower.

## **Insulating and Sealing Retractable Attic Stairways**

Building an insulated box is a good solution to insulating and sealing this weak point in the thermal boundary. Insulate the box and the cover to an R-value equal to the attic insulation level, or to the highest R-value structurally allowable. Use care in establishing a continuous thermal boundary when air-sealing and insulation around the hatch opening.



## **2.2.5 Calculating Attic Loose-Fill Insulation**

Install loose-fill attic insulation at a uniform depth to attain proper coverage (bags per square foot) and proper R-value at the manufacturer's specified installed thickness. Follow the manufacturer's instructions in order to achieve the correct density to meet the required R-value.

Loose-fill insulation always settles, and the manufacturer does account for settling in the listed minimum installation thickness charts. The installed thickness of cellulose decreases by 10 to 20 percent due to settling, and the installed thickness of blown fiberglass decreases by 3 to 10 percent. See Appendix A-3 for the calculation of density and the number of bags

needed to achieve the desired R-value at the settled density.

### **2.2.6 Blowing Attic Insulation**

Blown insulation is preferred over batt insulation because blown insulation forms a seamless blanket. Blowing attic insulation at the highest achievable insulation density helps minimize settling and reduces the circulation of convection currents within the insulation.

Follow these steps when installing loose-fill attic insulation:

1. Fill the edges of the attic first, near the eaves or gable end, and work back toward the attic hatch. Ensure proper insulation density over the exterior top-plates.
2. Install insulation to a consistent depth. Use a stick to level the insulation if necessary.
3. Perform a bag count while blowing to confirm that the proper depth and density of insulation is installed.
4. Avoid “fluffing”, and maintain an adequate density by moving as much insulation as possible through the hose with the available air pressure. The more the insulation is packed together in the blowing hose, the greater its installed density will be.
5. Fill floored attic cavities to a higher density to minimize settling, if no electrical or material hazards are present. Install dense packed insulation in floored attic cavities when hidden bypasses have not been addressed by other methods.
6. Add additional insulation over floored attics not used for storage, as needed to achieve the specified R-value.

### **2.2.7 Installing Attic Batt Insulation**

Follow these steps when installing fiberglass batts horizontally in the attic:

1. Install un-faced fiberglass-batt insulation. Cut batts carefully to ensure a tight fit against the ceiling joists and other framing.
2. Install two layers of batt insulation, at a right angle to each other. This will minimize voids and produce better thermal resistance.

### **2.2.8 Installing Attic Insulation in 1½ Story Homes (Finished Attics)**

Finished attics in 1½ story homes require special care when installing insulation. They often include four separate attic sections that require different sealing and insulating methods:

**Collar Beam** – the attic that runs between and connects the two roof rafter attics.

**Knee Wall** – the short wall between living area and the outside structural wall of the building. The space created behind the kneewall is often used for storage.

**Roof Rafter** – the cavities between the ceiling and the roof. The roof-rafter section that runs between the collar-beam attic and the top of the knee wall is sometimes referred to as the “slope” or “slant”.

**Outer Ceiling Joist** – flat attic surface, above first-floor living area.

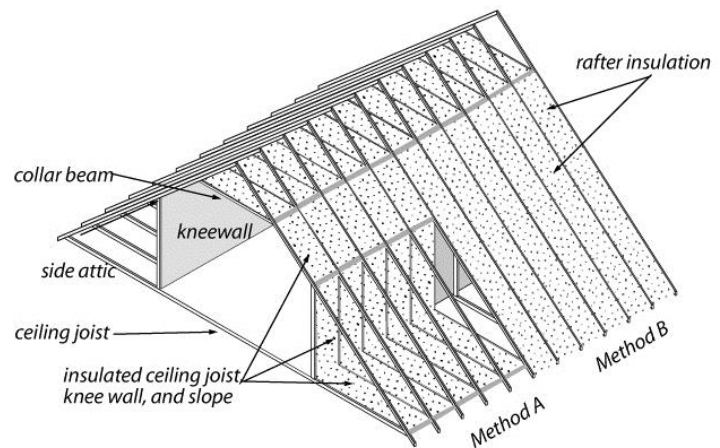
Follow these methods when insulating finished attics:

### Method A

Method A treats the space behind the knee wall as *unconditioned* attic space. The thermal boundary is located starting at the collar beam along the roof rafter, down the knee wall and across the outer ceiling joist.

Follow these steps to treat the attics using Method A:

1. Seal and carefully insulate built-in closets, dressers, or cabinets that protrude into the thermal boundary through the kneewall. Two-part foam can be effective at sealing and insulating these areas from behind



**Finished attic:** This illustration depicts two approaches to insulating a finished attic. Either A) insulate the kneewall and side attic floor, or B) insulate the rafters. Method A reduces the size of the heating envelope. The use of the finished attic must be determined before treating the attic.

2. Create an airtight and permanent seal in the floor joist space under the knee wall. This can be done by inserting pieces of rigid board insulation, drywall, or cardboard and foaming the perimeter of each piece with one-part foam; or by inserting a fiberglass batt into the cavity and spraying its face with two-part foam, or by using the **Bag Method** to blow dense-packed cellulose into the joist cavities.

To use the Bag Method: place a plastic or mesh bag over the end of the fill tube, and insert the tube and bag into the cavity. While holding on to the bag, start blowing insulation into the bag until full, and push the remaining part of the bag into the cavity. The bag will limit the amount of insulation it takes to plug this area.

3. Ensure insulation coverage is adequate where the knee wall meets the roof rafter and where the roof rafter meets the collar beam.
4. Insulate the roof rafters with dense-packed cellulose or fiberglass. The roof rafters can be insulated from either the collar-beam attic or the outer-ceiling-joist attic. Ensure that the opposite end has a barrier installed. Or, blow the roof rafters from the interior, like interior wall insulation. See *Dense-Packed Wall Insulation from the Interior* in Chapter 2 - Section 2.3.5.

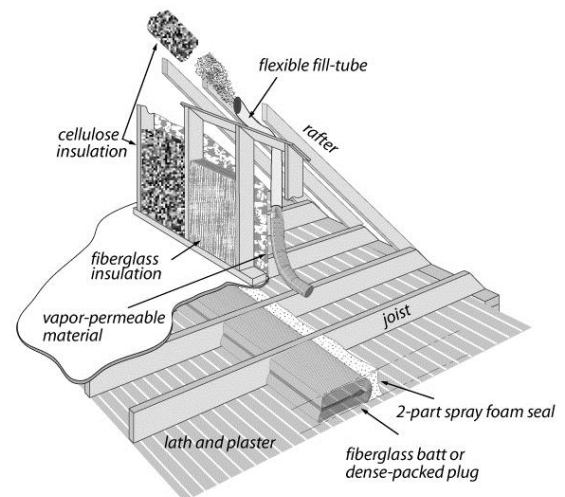
5. Insulate knee walls using dense-packed insulation, fiberglass batts or two-part foam. Before dense-packing the knee walls, prepare them for blowing by fastening a vapor-permeable material to the knee-wall studs with reinforcement as needed.
6. When insulating knee walls with batt insulation, use appropriately sized batts to fit into the stud cavities. A second layer of batt insulation may be installed perpendicular to the studs to minimize thermal bridging. Stack the batts and temporarily hold in place by stapling to the stud.
7. Cover existing and/or installed fiberglass-batt insulation with a vapor-permeable material to prevent wind-washing. Wrap or seal the vapor-permeable material around the studs at each end, to prevent air movement behind the material. When applying second layer of batts, fasten the vapor permeable material to the roof rafters and deck at the top and the floor at the bottom.
8. Insulate attic-access panels in the knee wall to the R-value of the adjacent knee wall insulation or to the maximum structurally allowable, whichever is lower. Operable panels must be weather-stripped and must close with a tight seal. Vertical access panels require mechanical fasteners to maintain a tight seal.
9. Install a dam if needed to maintain the insulation's R-value near the access and to prevent the outer-ceiling-joist insulation from spilling into the living area. Secondary access panels in a knee wall may be sealed permanently, with the owner's approval.
10. Follow steps in *Insulating Attics with Limited Accessibility in Chapter 2 - Section 2.2.9* for insulating the collar beam and outer ceiling joist attics.

## Method B

Method B treats the attic space behind the knee wall as *conditioned space*. The thermal boundary is located at the roof deck and at the gable-end walls.

Follow these steps to treat the attics using Method B:

1. Create an airtight and permanent seal in the joist space over the top of the first-floor exterior top-plate. This can be done by inserting pieces of rigid board insulation, drywall, or cardboard and foaming the perimeter of each piece with one-part foam; or by inserting a fiberglass batt into the cavity and spraying its face with two-part foam; or by using the Bag Method to blow dense-packed cellulose into the joist cavities. See "Method A" above for information about the Bag Method.



**Finished attic best practices:** Air sealing and insulation combine to dramatically reduce heat transmission and air leakage in homes with finished

2. Air-seal along the gable-end walls. Since the attic will become conditioned space, don't air-seal at the floor of the outer ceiling joist, nor at the floor-cavity key juncture beneath the knee wall. If the roof-rafter cavities will be insulated with fiberglass batts, air-seal at the backside of the roof deck as well.
3. Ensure insulation coverage is adequate and continuous where the roof rafter meets the outer ceiling joist and exterior top-plate.
4. Insulate the roof rafters with dense-packed cellulose or fiberglass. The roof rafters can be insulated from either the collar-beam attic or the outer-ceiling-joist attic. Ensure that the opposite end has a barrier installed. Or, blow the roof rafters from the interior, like interior wall insulation. See *Dense-Packed Wall Insulation from the Interior* in Section 2.3.5.
5. Continue to insulate the roof-rafter cavities from the top of the knee wall down to the first-floor exterior top-plate. If the rafter cavities are to be dense-packed, prepare them for blowing by fastening a *non-vapor-permeable* material with reinforcement as needed. Blow the rafter cavities from the outer-ceiling-joist attic through holes cut in the non-vapor-permeable material. Patch all drilled holes.
6. If batt insulation is installed, cover it with a *non-vapor-permeable* material. Air-seal the material, since it will now act as the primary pressure boundary.
7. If two-part foam is installed, don't install a vapor barrier, since two-part foam acts as both insulation and as an air-seal. Typically two-part foam insulation costs more than dense-packed cellulose or air-sealing and then installing batts.
8. Follow steps in Section 2.2.9 for insulating the collar beam attic.



### **2.2.9 Insulating Attics with Limited Accessibility**

Insulate attics with limited access to a higher loose fill density to minimize settling, if no electrical or material hazards are present. Install dense packed insulation in attic cavities when hidden bypasses have not been addressed by other methods.

These areas may include, but are not limited to:

- Shed roof
- Inaccessible collar-beam attic
- Inaccessible outer-ceiling-joist attic and knee wall

When insulating attics with limited accessibility:

1. Inspect the roof to verify that it is in good condition, without visible deterioration.
2. Access the cavity through its gable ends, rafter tails, roof deck or through the ceiling.
3. Inspect the attic for any air bypasses to the conditioned space. Seal discovered bypasses per instructions in Chapter 1 – Section 1.4.
4. Blow the insulation using an appropriate method.

### **2.2.10 Insulating Closed Roof Cavities**

Insulate closed roof cavities to a higher loose fill density to minimize settling, if no electrical or material hazards are present. Install dense packed insulation in attic cavities when hidden bypasses have not been addressed by other methods.

These areas may include, but are not limited to:

- Cathedral roof
- Flat roof
- Dormers
- Above bump-outs

When insulating closed roof cavities:

1. Inspect the roof to verify that it is in good condition, without visible deterioration.
2. Access the cavity through its gable ends, rafter tails, roof deck or through the ceiling.
3. Blow the insulation using an appropriate method to ensure proper density of installed insulation.

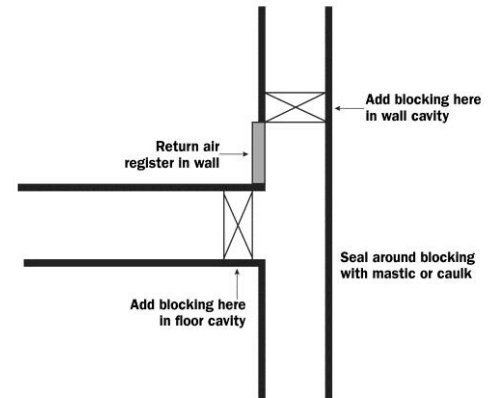
## 2.3 Wall Insulation

Properly installed dense-packed wall insulation reduces air leakage through walls and other closed building cavities because the fibers are driven into the cracks by the blowing machine.

Wall cavities encourage airflow like chimneys. Convection currents or air leakage can significantly reduce wall insulation's thermal performance if spaces remain for air to flow. Installing dense-packed wall insulation with a uniform coverage and density is important. The tube-fill dense-pack method is Wisconsin's chosen wall insulation method because it ensures an adequate coverage and density of insulation.

Caution is necessary when tube-filling walls, because the process puts pressure on the interior wall surface. If the pressure becomes too great on a particular material — such as plaster, drywall or paneling — the wall could crack or burst. It's also important to check for hidden holes in exterior walls and balloon framing where insulation can escape. Inspect exterior walls to identify cavities that are open to, contain, or are part of the forced-air distribution system. Seal distribution systems in cavities to be insulated. Use extreme care to ensure that insulation does not fill wall cavities that are part of the distribution system.

Adequate insulation coverage and density of insulation may be confirmed using an infrared camera and laser thermometer. Whenever possible, use these tools to verify complete insulation coverage. Uninsulated and poorly insulated parts of the wall will display differently than a well-insulated wall. The tool is best used whenever a substantial temperature difference exists, or can be created, on either side of the wall.



**Infrared scanner:** Allows the user to see temperature differences, which verify insulation's coverage in a wall cavity.

### Problems with Low Density Insulation



### **2.3.1 Calculating Wall Coverage and Density**

Dense-packed wall insulation should be installed to a density of 3.5 to 4.5 pounds per cubic foot for cellulose, and 2.0 to 2.5 pounds per cubic foot for fiberglass. These calculations serve to determine the number of bags necessary to insulate walls and to judge density after completing the wall insulation job.

See Appendix A-3 for the calculation of density and the number of bags needed to achieve the R-value at the settled density.

### **2.3.2 Inspecting and Repairing Walls for Installing Insulation**

1. Inspect walls for evidence of moisture damage.
2. Seal obvious gaps in external window trim or other areas that may permit the penetration of water into the wall.
3. Before removing siding, detach any clamps that secure gutters, electrical poles, etc. to the exterior siding.
4. Inspect indoor surfaces of exterior walls to ensure that they are strong enough to withstand the force of dense-packing. Reinforce or repair weak walls where necessary, prior to dense-packing.
5. Inspect for interior openings from which insulation may escape, such as pocket doors, un-backed cabinets, interior soffits, closets, and balloon-framing openings in the attic or crawl space. Taking a few minutes to investigate these areas will save a lot of time and mess later, if openings do exist. Seal openings as necessary to prevent blown insulation from escaping.
6. Don't insulate cavities used as forced-air distribution. Also, don't insulate cavities containing live knob-and-tube wiring, bare wires, or open junctions. In the customer file, document the location of cavities used as distribution and with knob-and-tube wiring. See *Electrical Safety* in Chapter 5 – Section 5.4.

### **2.3.3 Removing Siding and Drilling Sheathing**

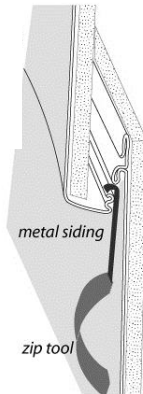
When insulating a wall from the exterior, remove the outer layer of siding to drill through sheathing and any sub-layers of siding. Removing the siding may make it easier to insert a flexible fill tube, since the tube must pass through one less layer of material. Carefully removed and handled siding is reinstalled after insulating, creating an appearance as close to the original as possible. Drill holes through siding only as a last resort and only if siding cannot be removed. There must be documentation in the customer file on the conditions that precluded the removal of the siding.

Some siding materials require specialized procedures. Cement-asbestos board (transite, also called slate siding), and stucco may only be disturbed by persons with appropriate Department of Health Services (DHS) asbestos certification (see the Wx Program Manual, Appendix H for complete asbestos policy). Sidewall-insulation procedures should follow Lead Safe Weatherization procedures under the direction of a Lead Safe Renovator when applicable (See Wx Program Manual, Appendix G, for complete lead policy). Any person who completes this work must have been trained in Lead Safe Weatherization procedures.

1. Metal or vinyl siding may be removed with a zip tool.
2. Lap siding requires careful prying with a flat bar underneath the nails that fasten the siding to the framing. Cut the paint between pieces of siding with a utility knife before prying.

For more information regarding siding removal, please refer to “Dense-pack Sidewall Insulation” video, available from the Weatherization Training Media Library.

**Removing metal or vinyl siding:** A zip tool separates joints in metal siding.



### 2.3.4 Dense-Packed Wall Insulation From The Exterior

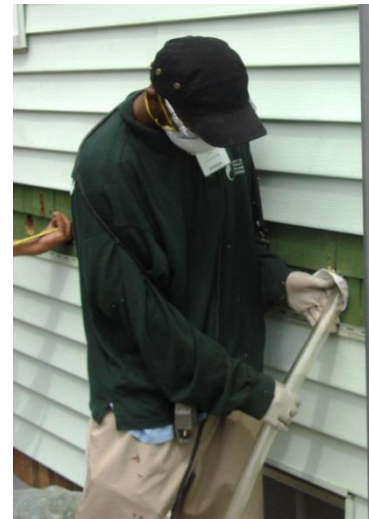
Dense-packed wall insulation is best installed using the tube method with an insulation blower equipped with separate controls for air and material feed.

Mark the fill tube in 1-foot intervals, so that the installer knows when the tube has reached the top of the wall cavity and when the end of the tube is almost removed upon completion of dense-packing the cavity.

To prevent settling, loose-fill insulation must be blown at the recommended density of 3.5 to 4.5 pounds per cubic foot for cellulose and 2.0 to 2.5 pounds per cubic foot for fiberglass.

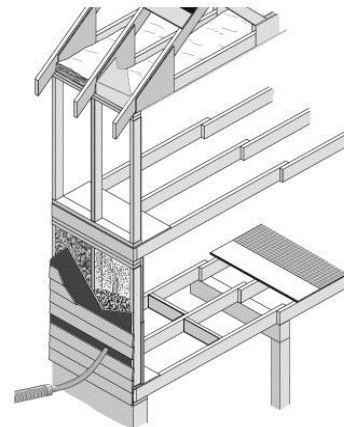
To insulate sidewalls from the exterior:

1. Remove siding, following lead-safe practices if required. See *Lead and Lead-Safe Weatherization in Chapter 5 – Section 5.3.8*.
2. Drill or cut a 2- to 3-inch diameter hole to access each cavity to be insulated.



**Tube-filling Walls:** Insulation is dense-packed into walls using a fill tube inserted into the wall cavity.

3. Probe all wall cavities through holes, to identify fire blocking, diagonal bracing, and other obstacles. After probing, drill or cut whatever additional holes are necessary to ensure complete coverage.
4. Start by insulating several full-height, unobstructed wall cavities, so the installed density can be calculated and the blower controls can be set properly.
5. Depending on the location of the hole, insert the tube all the way to one end of the cavity. Start the machine, and back the hose out slowly as the cavity fills. Work the hose back and forth in the cavity to pack the insulation tighter, if necessary.
6. Shut off the flow of material when approximately one foot of tube is remaining in the wall. Re-insert the tube to the opposite end of the cavity, and repeat Step 5.



**Tube-filling walls:** This method can be accomplished from inside or outside the home. It is the preferred wall insulation method because it is a reliable way to achieve a uniform coverage and density.

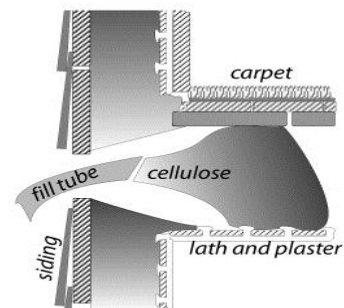


**Insulation hoses, fittings, and the fill tube:** Smooth, gradual

7. Shut off the flow of material when the cavity has been completely filled.
8. Plug the holes, seal the plugs to prevent water and air infiltration, and replace the siding.

When insulating balloon-framed walls or the band-joint areas on multi-story buildings, insulate the perimeter between the two floors by blowing insulation into each floor cavity to create an insulation plug. This technique also prevents air movement through the floor cavity.

If the process is requiring too much insulation, use the Bag Method. See *Method A in Chapter 2 - Section 2.2.8* for information about the Bag Method.



**Plugging a balloon-framed floor cavity:** If possible, blow a plug of insulation into balloon-framed second floor cavities.

### 2.3.5 Dense-Packed Wall Insulation from the Interior

In homes where the walls cannot be insulated from the exterior, insulating from the interior may be necessary. Holes drilled for insulation must be returned to an appearance as close to original as possible, or so the result is satisfactory to the customer.

To insulate sidewalls from the interior:

1. Practice lead-safe weatherization techniques. See *Lead and Lead- Safe Weatherization in Chapter 5 – Section 5.3.8*.
2. When testing results require, follow asbestos protocols. See Appendix H of the Wisconsin Weatherization Program Manual for comprehensive asbestos policies.
3. Drill holes and stagger them by at least 6 inches up and down to avoid horizontal cracking in lath-and-plaster walls.
4. Use a non-conductive probe to determine where to drill into the next cavity.
5. Insert a fill tube, and dense-pack the cavity following the procedures detailed in *Dense-Packed Wall Insulation From the Exterior in Chapter 2 - Section 2.3.4*.
6. Use wooden plugs along with joint compound or quick-setting plaster to seal and patch the holes.
7. Chair rail or wallpaper trim can be installed to conceal the holes if necessary.
8. Remove baseboard or chair rail when possible to allow drilling. Use wood plugs and joint compound or quick-setting plaster to seal the holes before re-installing the baseboard or chair rail.

### **2.3.6 Dense Packing from Other Access Locations**

Balloon-framed cavities can often be insulated from either the attic or basement where the cavity is open. In these cases, use a temporary dam to completely fill the cavity with dense-packed insulation, following the procedures described in *Installing Attic Insulation in 1 ½ Story Homes (Finished Attics) in Chapter 2 - Section 2.2.8*.

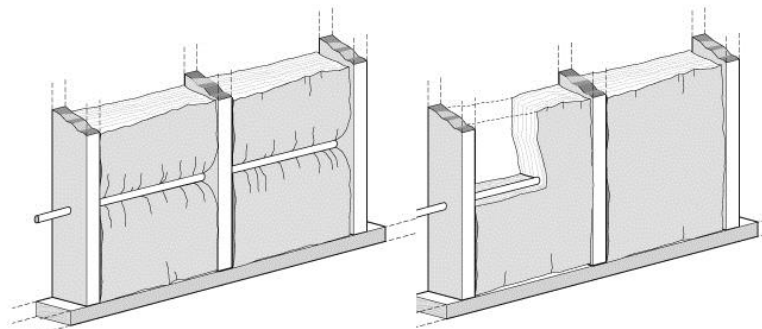
### **2.3.7 Interior Open-Cavity Wall Insulation**

Fiberglass batts achieve their rated R-value only when installed correctly. If there are gaps between the cavity and batt at the top and bottom, or if the batt is compressed, the effective R-value can decrease by as much as 30 percent.

To insulate open interior-wall cavities:

1. Prior to installing insulation, air-seal the exterior wall sheathing.
2. Use appropriately sized, un-faced friction-fit fiberglass batt insulation where possible.
3. Choose high-density batts whenever possible, and install to the maximum structurally allowable.
4. Install the batt to fill the entire cavity, without spaces at the corners or edges.

5. Cut batt insulation to the exact height of the cavity. A short batt creates air spaces above and beneath the batt, allowing convection. A long batt bunches up, creating air pockets.
6. Split batts around wiring, rather than letting the wiring bunch the batt to one side of the cavity.
7. Insulate behind and around obstacles with scrap pieces of batt.
8. Prior to installing drywall, cover exposed un-faced insulation with an airtight polyethylene vapor barrier. Install the vapor barrier to the warm side of the wall.
9. Kraft- or foil-faced insulation exposed to the interior living space must be covered with minimum half-inch drywall or other material that has an ASTM E84 flame spread rating of 25 or less. (Exception: Insulation with a Class A Facing with a flame spread of 25 or less.)



**Fiberglass batts, compressed by a cable:**  
This reduces the wall's R-value by creating a void between the insulation and interior wallboard.

**Batt, split around a cable:** The batt attains its rated R-value.

Dense-packed insulation may sometimes be blown into open stud cavities through an air barrier or plastic mesh. This is a good option if the insulation is packed densely enough to resist settling. The mesh will bulge if installed at the proper density, however, and it could hinder drywall installation. Consider instead cutting holes in the drywall to tube-fill the cavities with dense-packed insulation after installing drywall.

## 2.4 Floor and Foundation Insulation

Insulation and air-sealing of the foundation combine to complete the thermal boundary at the base of the building. As parts of the foundation are identified and defined as inside of the thermal and pressure boundaries, it is very important to ensure that exposed soil is covered with a vapor retarder. Install a 6-mil vapor retarder over exposed earth.

The choice between insulating the floor or the foundation should be made based on accessibility and if heating distribution or plumbing runs through the area. Basements are generally not insulated during weatherization, but sealing is typically required to stop air infiltration. For other considerations see *Locating the Pressure/Thermal Boundary in Chapter 1 – Section 1.5.3*.

### **2.4.1 Establishing a Thermal Boundary**

To establish an effective thermal boundary, the insulation and air barrier should be adjacent to each other, with the air barrier located between the insulation and the conditioned space.

In most Northern climates, the preferred method is to insulate and air-seal the foundation walls and not the floor. This may involve sealing crawlspace vents as appropriate. This strategy encloses the furnace, ducts, pipes, and other features within the thermal and pressure boundaries.

### **2.4.2 Sill-Box Insulation**

The joist spaces at the perimeter of the floor can be a weak point in the thermal boundary. Insulating both the rim joist and longitudinal box joist are appropriate either as individual procedures or as part of floor or foundation insulation.

Air-seal stud cavities in balloon-framed homes as a part of insulating the rim joist. If the sill box will be insulated, two-part foam can be useful as it insulates and air-seals in one application. One primary advantage of two-part foam is its applicability in areas of limited accessibility. Follow the foam manufacturer's installation instructions and applicable building codes when installing two-part foam. Before applying spray foam, ensure that the substrate is dry and reasonably clean.

Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when installing two-part foam. Follow the manufacturer recommendations for safety precautions. See *Personal Protective Equipment in Chapter 5 – Section 5.1*.

Rigid board insulation is also good for insulating and air-sealing the rim-joist area. If foam-board is used to insulate the rim, spray foam can be used to seal around the edges. Longitudinal box-joist cavities, enclosed by a floor joist, may be sealed and blown with wall insulation unless there is evidence of a moisture problem in the area. If the insulation will be in direct contact with the foundation, cellulose insulation should not be used to prevent potential moisture issues.



Use fiberglass-batt insulation with caution. Air can circulate around the fiberglass, causing condensation and encouraging mold on the cold rim joist. Fiberglass batts may be used to insulate the rim joist only when:

1. The sill box is effectively air-sealed.
2. The batts are cut to the proper size and completely fill the cavity.

### 2.4.3 Floor Insulation

Prior to insulating the floor, take all appropriate measures to establish an effective air barrier at the floor, in order to prevent air from passing through or around floor insulation.

#### Insulating Open Floor Cavities

Install a ground-moisture barrier that runs up the foundation walls at least 6 inches in crawl spaces. Seal the ground-moisture barrier to the foundation wall with appropriate material, and seal all seams and penetrations as well.

**Caution:** Moisture barriers are typically for use in crawl spaces. In basements, restrict their use to basements with dirt floors and limited access. If the ground-moisture barrier is installed in a seldom-used basement, install walk boards to prevent residents from slipping. Problems such as plumbing leaks or bad site drainage must be addressed prior to installing the barrier, to avoid water pooling on or under the barrier.



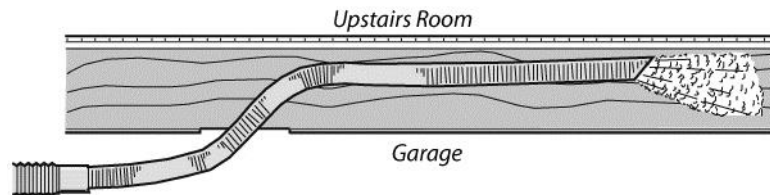
Complete the following when insulating open floor cavities:

1. If the walls are balloon-framed, air-seal the bottoms of the stud cavities prior to installing floor insulation to contain wall insulation.
2. Install maximum thickness of insulation between floor joists that the structure allows. Fill the entire joist space if possible and cost-effective. Fit floor insulation tightly against the subfloor and the rim joist to reduce air convection.
3. Install insulation without voids, edge gaps, or end gaps. Fit insulation closely around cross bracing and other obstructions.
4. Securely support batt insulation within each cavity with insulation hangers, plastic mesh, a vapor-permeable air barrier, or other supporting material.
5. Seal and insulate ducts remaining in the crawl space or unoccupied basement. See *Forced-Air Furnace Air Distribution in Chapter 3 – Section 3.4* for information on sealing and insulating duct work.
6. Consider installing a vapor-permeable air barrier to prevent convective looping,

support the insulation, and keep pests out.

### Insulating enclosed floor cavities

Dense pack floor cavities with cellulose or fiberglass loose-fill insulation. Confirm that the cavities are enclosed by rigid sheeting. This method works well in garage ceilings, cantilevered floors, and beneath bay windows.



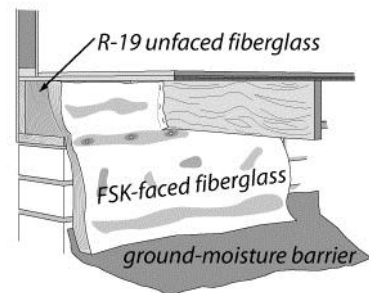
**Blowing a garage floor cavity:** Uninsulated floor cavities can be blown with fiberglass or cellulose insulation, using a fill tube.

## 2.4.4 Foundation Insulation

Foundation insulation is usually installed on the inside of the foundation wall. Less frequently, foundation insulation is applied from the home's exterior.

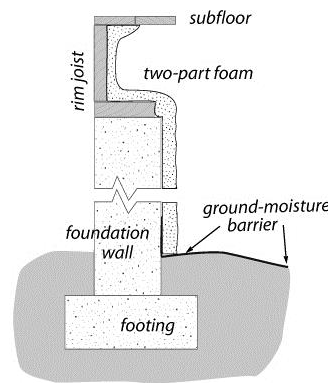
### Interior foundation insulation

1. Attach insulation to the inside wall surface with appropriate fasteners and/or adhesive. Install insulation with no significant voids or edge gaps.
2. FSK (foil scrim kraft) fiberglass insulation should be attached to the sill plate, floor joists, and/or floor. Insulate the rim joists with un-faced fiberglass before installing the FSK-faced insulation to prevent a void behind the FSK insulation at the rim joist.
3. Securely attach extruded or expanded polystyrene or foil-faced polyisocyanurate insulation boards when installed on flat foundation walls.
4. Spray two-part foam on the interior surface of the foundation to maintain required insulation level. This may require application of more than one coat to assure full curing of the material. Take proper precautions for the safety of the crews and occupants during installation. Follow manufacturer's recommendations for application and for safety equipment to be used. Follow all applicable building codes. When applied correctly, two-part foam will insulate and air-seal the foundation. Typically two-part foam expands to twice the thickness of the initial application, so be careful not to over-insulate.

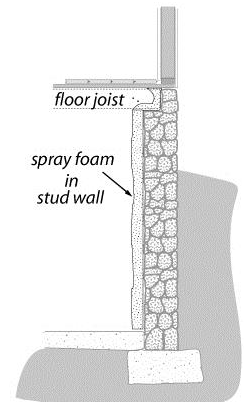


**Fiberglass foundation insulation:** Use this method only in dry conditions where the drainage outdoors is effective.

5. In cold weather, apply a skim-coat of foam first, before fully spraying the wall. The skim-coat will heat up the wall, which will help the foam adhere to the wall.
6. When two-part foam is used, a thermal barrier is required to separate the foam plastic from the living area. Thermal barriers can be applied to a wall that separates crawlspace insulation from a basement. For buildings with only a crawlspace, the plywood flooring serves as the separation. For buildings with only a crawlspace, the plywood flooring serves as the separation.
7. Attach outside access hatches securely to the foundation wall, latched and weather-stripped. Insulate the hatch only when it is part of the thermal boundary.



**Foam-insulated crawl space:** Two-part foam insulates and seals the rim joist as well as insulating the foundation walls.



**2-part foam sprayed on rubble masonry:** Rubble masonry walls can be insulated on the interior with sprayed foam.

### Exterior foundation insulation

1. Install exterior foam insulation to a minimum depth of 6 inches below grade, unless restricted by a non-excavatable ground cover such as a sidewalk. Apply a durable covering or coating to the entire surface of the insulation, including joints and corners.
2. Completely cover the exposed foundation with insulation.
3. All connecting joints must form a seal or be sealed with appropriate sealant.
4. If insulation is not protected by the siding, install a drip edge.

## **Final Inspection and Quality Assurance Standards**

Acceptable installations for building shell insulation measures should reflect the following.

### **Attic Insulation**

#### **Attic insulation storage area**

1. The storage area is as small as possible and still met the homeowners needs
2. Floor plugs installed if needed.
3. The insulation beneath the storage area is a minimum of R-19
4. The storage area presents no hazards to occupant.
5. Items in storage area were protected from insulation.
6. Floor boards were re-installed properly.

### **Damming and Boxing**

1. The dam is the same height or higher than the surrounding insulation
2. The dam is effective in performing it's specified function
3. When necessary the dam is constructed of noncombustible material
4. Chimney dam is at least 2" from an active chimney or per manufacture's specifications.

### **Attic access**

1. Allows for repeated access to attic.
2. All trim properly sealed and weather-stripped.
3. Access panel to R-value of the attic or the maximum structurally allowable, whichever is lower.
4. Access is covered with an appropriate fire rated material, such as 5/8" drywall (as required by code).

## **Final Inspection and Quality Assurance Standards**

### **Attic bypass sealing**

1. Bypasses are sealed to the level called for under Wisconsin's Cost Effective Guidelines.
2. Bypasses are sealed with an appropriate material and amount of material.
3. All equipment mounted in the ceiling is properly air sealed.

### **Roof leaks**

1. No visible evidence of roof leaking is present.

### **Wiring attic**

1. All electrical boxes covered, sealed, and flagged if concealed by insulation.
2. All live knob and tube wiring boxed out prior to insulation, the boxing ends are sealed, and the boxing is flagged.
3. Rewired with permit and inspected (if required).

### **Heat producing products (Lights, chimneys, flues, attic furnaces)**

1. Boxing is a minimum of 3" from device. Boxing material is gypsum wall board, cement board, or other code acceptable material.
2. Active chimneys meet all chimney guidelines (e.g. no cracking, no creosote present, structurally sound, etc.).

### **Exhaust fans & vent stacks**

1. Vents will exhaust the specified area to the outdoors.
2. Stacks are properly sealed at intersection with building materials.

### **Attic Vapor retarders**

1. Installed correctly toward the warm side.
2. Installed continuously.

## **Final Inspection and Quality Assurance Standards**

### **Attic Venting**

1. Allows air to pass through vent,
2. Installed vents are higher than the insulation material.

### **Attic floor insulation, open blow**

1. Installed to the R-value selected by the audit.
2. Insulation is installed to a uniform R-value, with no variances of greater than 2".
3. All wiring is properly flagged, no bare wiring.
4. Live knob and tube wiring is properly dammed and sealed.
5. Insulation certificate is properly posted.

### **Attic cavities (Site built)**

1. All areas specified are insulated.

### **Knee wall attic walls**

1. All cavities filled to maximum amount.
2. The permeable air barrier has seams and edges are sealed and it is mechanically fastened.

### **Sidewall Insulation**

#### **Sidewall insulation (Site built)**

1. All cavities properly insulated to the maximum allowable amount;
2. Blown insulation is installed from the exterior or the attic unless limited by building structure or health and safety issues, with prior approval of the building owner.
3. Based on file documentation (photos) work has been completed in a lead safe manner.
4. All siding that is suspect ACM has been addressed under the supervision of a competent person,

## **Final Inspection and Quality Assurance Standards**

### **Wiring sidewall**

1. All hazards are addressed prior to insulating.

### **Floors over unheated areas (Site built including cantilevers)**

1. Insulated to the maximum structurally allowable.
2. Permeable air barriers may be used on the cold side of the insulation
3. Weather and critter proof cover between cantilever insulation and the outside.

### **Sill box insulation**

1. Area is insulated to the level selected by the audit.

### **Exterior foundation insulation**

1. A minimum of R5 insulation installed.
2. NEAT documentation in the file.
3. Depth of the insulation is at least 6" and not greater than 14 inches.
4. Material has protective coating at least 6" below grade.
5. An effective drip edge makes a positive seal between the foundation and the wall assembly.

### **Interior foundation insulation**

1. R-19 insulation or maximum R-value determined by energy audit is installed.
2. If 2-part foam is installed there must be a barrier between the area of application and living area of the building, including unintentionally heated basements.
3. Continuous vapor retarder covers all exposed soil surfaces and is sealed to the wall.